



# Bulletin of Popular Information

Volume 33

June, 1958

Number 6

## Witchhazel Color Variations

Variations in flower color among individual plants of the Vernal Witchhazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*) are not unusual, but when they are as distinct as those characterizing the following two horticultural varieties, they are worth knowing about.

*Hamamelis vernalis purpurea*, in full bloom on March 18, displayed flowers consistently larger than those of the type and with noticeably more slender petals of an attractive wine red hue. To emphasize this color deviation one of the light yellow flowered forms should be selected as a companion plant for what may well be the season's earliest planned color combination.

*Hamamelis vernalis carnea*, the Redpetal Vernal Witchhazel, introduces a still different color note, rose pink. Subtle when seen at a distance, the coloring is quite distinctive at close range. Like the type species these precocious flowering forms will be most appreciated in a sunny pocket where earliness is encouraged. Being woody in character, they fit best into a natural type of landscape.

## Withers Pink Charm Redbud, *Cercis canadensis*

### "Withers Pink Charm"

Redbud is another native prone to variation and the farther west one goes the more varied the range. It was in Virginia, however, that one of the loveliest forms was found, "Withers Pink Charm", a variety selected because of the clarity of its soft pink coloring. Those who find magenta discordant will welcome it particularly for no trace of this hue is evident in its make up. Even in the bud stage it shows a difference, the unopened petals being glowing carmine, the calyxes scarlet. The Arboretum plant is still quite small, having been presented in 1955 by Mr. Henry J. Hohman of Kingsville, Maryland. Dr. Withers, the discoverer of the plant, was a geneticist with the United States Department of Agriculture.

### Yulan Magnolia, *Magnolia denudata*

The fragrant Yulan Magnolia bloomed very well this spring (full bloom April 22), its thick textured cupped flowers of waxy white furnishing a welcome relief from the commonplace rosy pink combinations of the "*Soulangeana*" forms. Actually a good sized tree, for the Yulan eventually reaches 35 or 40 feet, plenty of space, preferably in full sun must be allowed for its development. Like many of the other Magnolias it has a symmetrically rounded crown and bears sizeable (4-6") foliage of rather bold texture. The fall ripening cucumber-like pods, splitting open to reveal red coated seeds, are more or less typical of the genus. Although not a new plant, for it was introduced in the late 18th century from its native habitat, Central China, the Yulan is still rarely encountered in this area.

### Chinese Bushcherry, *Prunus japonica*

Notwithstanding its scientific name, *Prunus japonica* is not Japanese at all, but rather a native of Central China interesting primarily because it adds another ornamental to the list of low growing bushes (to 5 ft.).

Typical of the *Prunus*, it is showiest during the blooming season which is in early May. At that time every branch is a mass of fragile light pink flowers, 2 or 3 to a cluster, and encircling the stems in wand-like formation. Come early August and the bush returns to prominence, small subglobose cherries of wine red reaching full coloring. Their very abundance assures an attractive showing.

From the closely related single Dwarf Flowering Almond, *P. glandulosa*, the foliage of the Chinese Bushcherry is distinguished by its more ovate outline, long acuminate tips and by the fact that its broadest point is below the middle.

### Sargent Cherry, *Prunus sargentii*

Of the few Japanese Cherries able to adjust to the rigors of our local climate the most dependable and tallest growing is the Sargent Cherry, *Prunus sargentii*, an arborescent species to 45 ft. introduced from the Orient in 1890. Although usually a spotty bloomer locally, every tree in the collection flowered with exceptional vigor this year. Peak bloom was reached about April 21, attracting the attention of all Arboretum visitors at that time. While individual blossoms are not as large as those of some of the oriental cherries, they are more than an inch across, single and deep pink in color. Buds are darker. Almost before the petals start to fall the bronzy tints of the newly unfolding leaves become noticeable, providing a color note almost equal to that furnished by the flowers. Sargent Cherry fruit is small (1 cm.) and inconspicuous (purplish black), but the tree's vivid red fall foliage effect is charming and the smooth polished bark attractive in winter.

The possibility of using Sargent Cherry as a street tree has been suggested, and in view of its uniformity of habit and round-the-season attraction, the idea might warrant consideration.

### Albert-thorn Honeysuckle, *Lonicera spinosa alberti*

Pansy scented rosy lilac flowers with prominent lemon yellow anthers and long tubular corollas called attention in late May (20) to this lesser known dwarf honeysuckle, brought from Turkestan in 1880. Although a part of the Arboretum collection from time to time it has never persisted long under field conditions. Planted in cultivated areas, however, where drainage is good and where sunlight abounds it can prove an interesting subject in the dwarf shrub class. Three to four feet is its maximum size. Both its blue green coloring and fine textured, narrow, willow like leaves are distinctive and its arching habit of growth graceful. Small red berries provide late summer interest.

### Weeping Crabapples

By reason of their greater hardiness the weeping crabapples are especially recommended locally as substitutes for the more tender weeping Japanese Cherries. And, while somewhat less graceful of branch they will be found to be equally picturesque in outline and quite as attractive in flower. Three forms characterized by a pendulous or weeping habit are conspicuous in the Arboretum Crabapple collection, "Oekonomierat Echtermeyer", "Exzellenz Thiel" and "Red Jade".

*Malus* Oekonomierat Echtermeyer, (x *gloriosa* clone x *pumila niedzwetzkyana*) or "Pink Weeper" as it is known in the trade, is the largest and most vigorous of the three, a rounded tree of 25 ft. semi-weeping in habit and with bronze tinted foliage of lively coloring. It is an annual bearer, producing good sized rose pink flowers in abundance. The fruits are pinkish red with red flesh. The Spaeth Nursery of Berlin introduced it into the trade in 1914.

*Malus* Exzellenz Thiel (x *scheideckeri* clone, *prunifolia pendula* x *floribunda*), another earlier origination of the Spaeth firm (1909), is of special interest because of its pendulous branches. Grafted high, it will develop into a rounded tree to 20 ft. whereas lower grafts result in more bushy specimens. An alternate bearer, it produces its pink budded white flowers every other year. They appear in early May and are almost 2 inches in diameter. Red and yellow fruit follow in the fall.

The newest and lowest growing (to 15 ft.) of the three is *Malus* "Red Jade", a distinctive crabapple introduced by the Brooklyn Botanic Garden in 1953. A picturesque-irregular branching habit and long pendulous to semi-pendulous branches are characteristics to which it owes much of its charm, although the beauty of the bright red cherry size fruit deserves its full share of credit. It is freely produced and lasts well into the fall. The annually borne flowers are not as spectacular, being small and white with a suggestion of pink on the outside of the petals. The buds are also pinkish.



## Source of Bird Attracting Plants

Those who have inquired about nursery sources of bird attracting plants will be pleased to know of a Michigan organization devoted exclusively to this specialty. A price list is available upon request from:

Michigan Audubon Service Department  
Dutch Mountain Nursery Sales  
Augusta, Michigan

E. L. Kammerer



Tree Peony "Dawn at Mt. Fuji" (*Paeonia suffruticosa* Fuji-no-akebono). A very floriferous variety with large, double, creamy white blossoms faintly marked purplish lilac at the base. (full bloom May 24, 1958)

---

**Trustees:** Sterling Morton, Chairman; Clayton J. Adams; Edward H. Baker, Jr.; Laurence A. Carlton; Garfield King; Wirt Morton; Daniel Peterkin, Jr.; Suzette Morton Zurcher; Victor K. Zurcher

**Staff:** Clarence E. Godshalk, Director; E. Lowell Kammerer, Curator of Collections; Mrs. Raymond Watts, Naturalist; Anthony Tyznik, Asst. to the Director; Webster R. Crowley, Jr., Research Technician; Gordon Scott, Horticulturist; Walter E. Eickhorst, Asst. Curator of Collections; Roy M. Nordine, Propagator; Raymond Schulenberg, Asst. Propagator

Published monthly by The Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Ill. Subscription \$1.00 a year; single copies 10c; double copies 20c